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REVIEWERS GUIDE

PART A: ***Editorial Office Only***

SECTION I

Manuscript Title: Determinants of Childhood Diarrhoea Management: A Socio-Economic Perspective Among Mothers in Kwali Area Council, FCT, Abuja, Nigeria

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OVERALL ASSESSMENT

This manuscript addresses an important public health issue—childhood diarrhoea management—within a specific Nigerian context. The study provides valuable insights into socio-economic determinants affecting maternal health-seeking behaviors and treatment choices. While the research demonstrates solid foundational work, several areas would benefit from refinement to enhance clarity, methodological rigor, and overall impact.

RATING SUMMARY

Criteria	Rating	Comments
Originality	2 (Good)	The study applies established frameworks to a localized context, providing useful empirical data from Kwali Area Council.
Contribution to the Field	2 (Good)	Adds valuable context-specific data on childhood diarrhoea management in a peri-urban Nigerian setting.
Technical Quality	2-3 (Good-Fair)	Methodology is generally sound but would benefit from additional detail on data quality control and statistical analysis.
Clarity of Presentation	2-3 (Good-Fair)	Generally well-structured but contains grammatical errors and some organizational issues that affect readability.
Depth of Research	2 (Good)	Literature review is comprehensive; however, the discussion could more deeply engage with contradictory findings and theoretical implications.

DETAILED COMMENTS

1. GENERAL COMMENTS

The manuscript presents a well-motivated study on childhood diarrhoea management practices among mothers in Kwali Area Council. The integration of the Health Belief Model provides a useful theoretical lens, and the findings highlight critical socio-economic barriers to optimal care.

2. ABSTRACT

Strengths:

- Concisely summarizes the study purpose, methods, and key findings
- Effectively highlights the practical significance of the research

Suggestions for Improvement:

- The abstract mentions both questionnaires and IDI, but the results section only presents quantitative data. Please clarify which data sources informed which findings.
- Consider adding a brief statement about the theoretical framework used.

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3. INTRODUCTION

Strengths:

- Well-contextualized with global, regional, and national statistics
- Establishes the significance of the problem effectively
- Demonstrates awareness of relevant literature

Suggestions for Improvement:

- The introduction could be more concise—some repetition exists between paragraphs 1-3
- Consider adding a clearer statement of research objectives or questions at the end
- The transition to the specific study context (Kwali Area Council) could be smoother

Grammatical Corrections:

→ "Diarrheal disease was **the** third highest cause of death" → "Diarrheal disease was the third **leading** cause of death"

→ "Despite **both being** preventable and treatable" → "Despite being **both** preventable and treatable"

→ "UNICEF **&** WHO estimates **had** put" → "UNICEF **and** WHO estimates **have** placed" or simply "UNICEF and WHO estimate that"

→ "Also, a review study of research between 2013 and 2023 **again** proved" → delete "**again**" (redundant)

→ "children whose mothers lacked education" → "children whose mothers **had no formal** education"

→ "This is because children are more susceptible to this and other diseases due to **the** immaturity **of their** immune **systems**"

→ "diarrhea can be caused by several infectious agents, being influenced by determinants of biological, environmental, economic**,** and socio-cultural **nature**"

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4. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Strengths:

- Clearly articulates the research gap
- Provides strong justification for focusing on Kwali Area Council

Suggestions for Improvement:

- The problem statement is somewhat repetitive with the introduction—consider streamlining
- The final sentence could more explicitly state the research questions or objectives

Grammatical Corrections:

→ "kills nearly 424,000 children annually **despite** the existence" (delete "and")

→ "little empirical evidence exists **for** the Kwali Area Council"

→ "could enhance the possibility" → "could **increase the likelihood**"

→ "Diarrhoea disease**s** among children **has** become **a** crucial health concern**s**" → "Diarrhoea disease among children has become **a** crucial health concern"

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5. LITERATURE REVIEW

Strengths:

- Comprehensive coverage of relevant literature
- Good integration of global, regional, and local studies
- Effective use of current sources

Suggestions for Improvement:

- Section 2.1 titled "Childhood Diarrhoea" contains some redundancy—consider condensing
- The empirical review (Section 2.2) could be better organized thematically rather than study-by-study
- Consider adding a brief paragraph summarizing gaps in the literature that your study addresses

Grammatical Corrections:

→ "diarrhoeal diseases are reported as **the** leading cause" → "diarrhoeal diseases are **a** leading cause"

→ "Childhood diarrhoea affecting children five years old and below" → "Childhood diarrhoea **in** children **aged** five years **and** below"

→ "poorly controlled" → "poorly managed"

→ "This, based on UNICEF and WHO (2023)**,** which estimates" → "According to UNICEF and WHO (2023), **approximately**"

→ Section 2.1.2: "access to facilities" → "access to **health** facilities"

→ "Mothers who are well educated will tend to adopt" → "Well-educated mothers **tend** to adopt" (avoid "will" for general truths)

→ "offspring of mothers who were secondary or higher educated" → "offspring of mothers **with** secondary **or higher** education"

→ "have better chances of affording" → "are **more likely to afford**"

→ "Poorer children are **more** likely to be malnourished"

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6. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Strengths:

- The Health Belief Model is appropriate for this study
- Good explanation of the model's components

Suggestions for Improvement:

- The application of HBM to the specific study context could be made more explicit
- Consider adding a conceptual framework diagram showing how the HBM components relate to your variables

Grammatical Corrections:

→ "the decision of an individual with respect to" → "**individuals' decisions regarding**"

→ "This model was developed for the first time in the 1950**'**s" → "This model was **first** developed in the 1950s" (no apostrophe in decades)

→ "Personal beliefs influence **a** person's health choices"

→ "Health Belief Model explains that health behaviour" → "**The** Health Belief Model explains"

→ "available resources **to** address these problems"

→ "the belief about the **likelihood** of getting a disease" (not "livelihood")

→ "how much risk a person perceives **he/she** has" → "how much risk a person perceives **they have**" (gender-neutral language)

→ "**there is** no stimulus to act" → "there **may be** no stimulus to act"

→ "includes evaluation**s** of both"

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7. METHODOLOGY

Strengths:

- Clear sampling strategy with appropriate sample size calculation

- Good use of multistage sampling technique
- Ethical considerations appear to have been addressed

Suggestions for Improvement:

- **Major concern:** The methodology states both questionnaires and IDI were used, but only quantitative results are presented. Please clarify whether qualitative data were collected and, if so, how they were analyzed and where they are reported.
- More detail needed on questionnaire validation and pilot testing
- Missing information on response rate and how non-responses were handled
- Data analysis section mentions only descriptive statistics—were inferential statistics (e.g., chi-square, logistic regression) considered? This would strengthen the analysis given your objectives about "determinants."
- Ethical approval details should be included (which ethics committee, approval number, informed consent procedures)

Grammatical Corrections:

→ "enables the collection of data from a subset" → "**facilitates**" (more formal)

→ "the target population for this study is not the entire population" (delete "However," at sentence start as it doesn't contrast with previous sentence)

→ "married women, both young and adult women**,** who are between 18 years and above" → "married women aged 18 years and above"

→ "The choice of this category of persons (married women) was because" → "This category was chosen because **these women**"

→ "know what it takes to manage the cases of diarrhoea **on** their children" → "**in** their children"

→ "In determining the sample size for this study**,** Yamane (1967) **statistical technique** was used"

→ "Detail of Yamane (1967) **statistics** formula" → "**Details** of **the** Yamane (1967) formula"

→ "36 streets" → check this number (5 wards × 4 streets = 20 streets, not 36)

→ "400 participants" → your calculated sample size was 400, but you analyzed 395—please explain the discrepancy

→ "uniformity" → "**consistency**"

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8. RESULTS

Strengths:

- Clear presentation of socio-demographic characteristics
- Tables are generally well-formatted and informative
- Good use of frequencies and percentages

Suggestions for Improvement:

- Cross-tabulation in Table 2 (second one) would benefit from statistical testing (chi-square test) to establish significance
- Consider adding a table showing bivariate or multivariate analysis of determinants
- The narrative could better interpret the findings rather than just describing them
- Missing discussion of the 10 IDI interviews mentioned in methodology

Grammatical Corrections:

→ Table 1: "Civil**-**servant" → "Civil servant" (no hyphen)

→ "This indicates that most of the mothers are within their active reproductive and childcare years" (good interpretation—more of this needed!)

→ Table 2 title: "**Prevalence and management** practices" is unclear—the table shows management practices but not prevalence rates (% of children who had diarrhoea)

→ "Table 2: indicate**s**"

→ Second Table 2 should be **Table 3** (renumber subsequent tables accordingly)

→ In cross-tabulation table: "High use of ORS" → consider providing actual percentages in table cells, not just descriptions

→ Table 3: "encountered" vs. "encounter" (title inconsistency—use present tense throughout for consistency)

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9. DISCUSSION

Strengths:

- Good integration with existing literature
- Acknowledges alignment with WHO recommendations
- Identifies key socio-economic determinants

Suggestions for Improvement:

- The discussion largely restates findings—needs more critical analysis
- Limited engagement with contradictory findings or study limitations
- Could better explain *why* these socio-economic factors have the observed effects (mechanisms)
- Missing discussion of study limitations
- No comparison with similar Nigerian or African studies
- Policy implications could be more explicitly stated

Grammatical Corrections:

→ "The outcome is that oral rehydration solution" → "**A key finding is that** oral rehydration solution"

→ "with 45.6% of the mothers practicing it" → "with 45.6% of mothers **using** it"

→ "This outcome concurs with **the** World Health Organization (WHO) recommendation"

→ "suggests a long-term lack" → "suggests **persistent gaps in**" (more precise)

→ "transmission of antimicrobial resistance" → "**development** of antimicrobial resistance" (transmission is not quite the right term here)

→ "The socio-economic profile and diarrhoea care practices cross-tabulation" → "**The** cross-tabulation **of** socio-economic profile and diarrhoea care practices"

→ "less educated mothers and those with lower monthly earnings depended mostly" → "**relied more heavily**"

→ "Issues raised by mothers" → "**Challenges reported by** mothers"

→ "culture (19.7%)**,** and insufficient awareness" (add comma)

→ "They explain structural" → "**These findings highlight** structural"

→ "For healthcare-seeking pathways" → "**Regarding** healthcare-seeking pathways"

→ "and as noted by Iwu et al. (2021)**,** accentuates" → "and**,** as noted by Iwu et al. (2021), **accentuate**"

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10. CONCLUSION

Strengths:

- Concise summary of main findings
- Clear statement of implications

Suggestions for Improvement:

- Could more explicitly link back to the Health Belief Model
- Consider mentioning study limitations and directions for future research

Grammatical Corrections:

→ "maternal age, education**,** and income" (serial comma)

→ "improved knowledge and adoption" → "**demonstrated better** knowledge and adoption"

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11. RECOMMENDATIONS

Strengths:

- Practical and actionable recommendations
- Address multiple stakeholders

Suggestions for Improvement:

- Could prioritize recommendations based on findings

- Consider adding specific, measurable targets where possible

Grammatical Corrections:

→ Recommendation (i): "should strengthen healthcare infrastructure and **ensure** the availability **and affordability**" (parallel structure)

→ Recommendation (iii): Consider adding what this improved income would specifically enable regarding child health

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12. REFERENCES

Strengths:

- Generally good coverage of relevant literature
- Mix of classic and recent sources
- Appropriate use of WHO, UNICEF, and peer-reviewed sources

Suggestions for Improvement:

- Some citations in-text are not in reference list (e.g., Adeyemi et al., 2019; Iwu et al., 2021)

Specific Reference Corrections:

→ Check that all in-text citations match reference list entries exactly (author names, years)

In your reference section, all authors' names should be listed in full. The term *et al.* should only be used when citing more than two authors. Kindly review your reference list and include the full names of all authors in entries where *et al.* was used.

DECISION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

DECISION: Minor Revisions Required

This manuscript presents valuable research on an important public health topic. The study design is generally sound, and the findings contribute meaningfully to understanding socio-economic determinants of childhood diarrhoea management in Nigeria. However, several issues need to be addressed before publication:

Essential Revisions:

1. **Clarify the qualitative component:** Either present the IDI findings or remove references to qualitative methods if only quantitative data were ultimately used.
2. **Enhance statistical analysis:** Consider adding chi-square tests for Table 3 (cross-tabulation) and possibly logistic regression to identify independent predictors of appropriate diarrhoea management.
3. **Comprehensive proofreading:** Address all grammatical errors throughout the manuscript. Consider having a native English speaker or professional editor review the text.
4. **Renumber tables:** Correct the duplicate Table 2 numbering.

Recommended Revisions:

1. Streamline the introduction and literature review to reduce redundancy
2. Add a conceptual framework diagram
3. Expand the discussion to critically engage with findings
4. Include ethical approval details
5. Consider adding implications for the Health Belief Model based on findings

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CONCLUDING REMARKS

The authors have undertaken important work that addresses a significant public health challenge in Nigeria. With careful attention to the revisions outlined above, this manuscript has the potential to make a valuable contribution to the literature on childhood diarrhoea management and socio-economic health determinants. I commend the authors for their efforts and look forward to reviewing the revised manuscript.

Reviewer's Overall Assessment: This is a solid piece of research that requires moderate revisions to meet publication standards. The core findings are valuable, but presentation, analysis, and discussion need strengthening.

Date: October 15, 2025